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ABSTRACT

This is a description of the Early Childhood Evaluation Unit (ECEU), which was established as a unified, comprehensive means of conducting evaluation and research activities regarding Early Childhood Programs in the School District of Philadelphia. Its responsibilities include fulfilling the evaluation requirements stipulated by federal, state, or municipal funding sources. The ECEU is committed to the goals of: (1) providing information useful for all levels of program decision-making regarding the major early childhood programs in the school district; (2) contributing to data-based policy determination regarding early childhood efforts at local, state, and federal levels; and (3) serving the advancement of knowledge regarding effective early childhood programs. Included are brief descriptions of: priorities, organization and staff functions. The appendix contains a list of rankings of educational priorities derived from the responses of the Early Childhood Program Directors. (Author/MS)

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THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EVALUATION UNIT (ECEU)

INTRODUCTION

The Early Childhood Evaluation Unit was established as a unified, comprehensive means of conducting evaluation and research activities regarding Early Childhood Programs in the School District of Philadelphia. Its responsibilities include, but far exceed, the evaluation requirements stipulated by Federal, State, or Municipal funding sources. The ECEU is committed to the goals of (1) providing information useful for all levels of program decision-making regarding the major Early Childhood programs in the School District (2) contributing to data-based policy determination regarding early childhood efforts at local, state, and federal levels, and (3) serving the advancement of knowledge regarding effective early childhood programs.

The following sections regarding priorities, organization and function are intended to reflect this commitment.

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PRIORITIES

Appendix A contains a list of rankings of priorities derived from the responses of the Early Childhood Program Directors. (The rankings are based on weighted sums across the priority codes assigned the items by each director; in the weighting, A=6, 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1.) There were many tied ranks, and the 45 items are actually distributed among only 12 ranks. The 13 items ranked 1 to 10 respectively are as follows:

1. Pupil Attendance System (e.g., CARE system, and/or tie-in with Pupil Directory, etc.)

2.5. Analysis of nature and extent of training/staff development programs

2.5. Analysis of the effects of training/staff development programs

5. Effect of prekindergarten experience on school performance

5. Assessment of program implementation

5. Communication system between Early Childhood Programs and the Evaluation Unit and ORE

10. Analysis of Early Childhood Programs' effects on upper elementary and later school performance (achievement, self-image, etc.)

10. Analysis of the type and extent of parent involvement in each Early Childhood Program

10. Articulated record system regarding parent involvement between pre-kindergarten and school programs

10. Analysis of the nature and extent of special medical services available in programs

10. Analysis of the nature and extent of special dental services available

10. Analysis of the nature and extent of special psychological services available

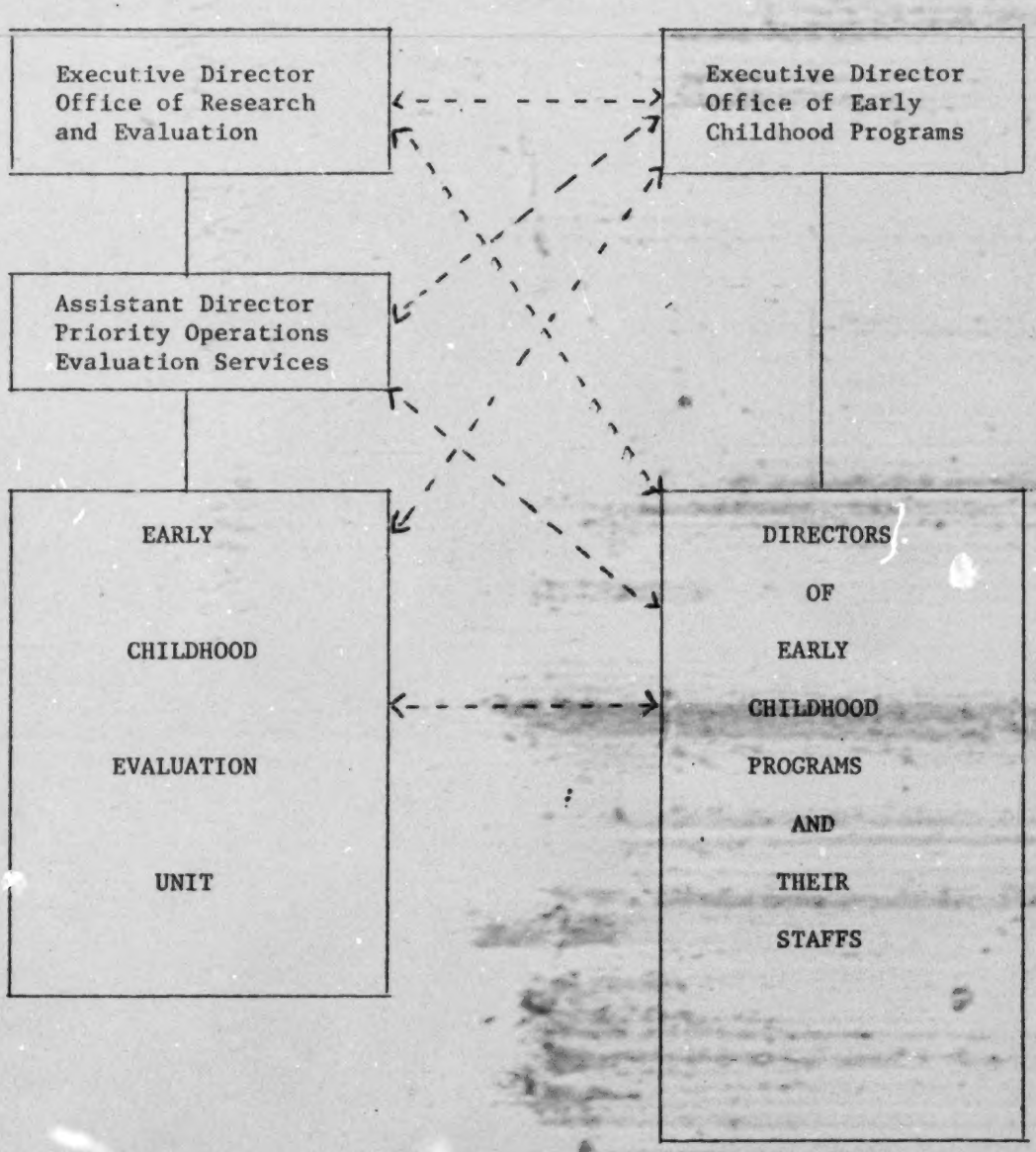
10. Analysis of training needs/requests

The results of the rankings, especially with respect to the highest ranked items listed immediately above, are closely allied with the major emphases established for the Early Childhood Evaluation Unit, as will be seen below in the section of this outline entitled Staff: Functions.

The priority (one of the 3 tied for rank #5) regarding the communication system between Early Childhood Programs and the Evaluation Unit is recognized as being pre-eminently important. This importance is meant to be conveyed by singling out this priority for graphic display in the chart that follows.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EVALUATION UNIT

COMMUNICATIONS CHART



Legend: Solid (_____) lines denote supervisory reporting responsibilities. Broken lines with arrows (<- - - ->) indicate communication system relationships.

ORGANIZATION

The Evaluation Unit's commitments, based on the joint program-evaluation staff conference this past June 23, 1976, and reflected in the rankings of priorities noted above, can best be honored by organizing the staff around responsibilities for areas and components rather than specific programs. This kind of organization, however, will not detract from the kind of evaluation services previously provided specific programs, but instead will enhance this service. It should also be noted that looking across programs in this way takes advantage of present staff expertise in ways that other forms of organization would not. (Appendix B lists positions and names of the evaluation unit; Appendix C lists staff locations and phones.)

STAFF FUNCTIONS

A. Primary Division of Responsibilities

The Manager of ECEU is responsible for the overall direction and supervision of the unit and reports directly to the Assistant Director of Priority Operations Evaluation Services. The manager is to establish policy and priorities for the unit based upon Early Childhood Program Administration requests and the directives of POES and ORE. Regular responsibilities include: planning of operations, staff consultation and development, reports relating to composite characteristics of Early Childhood Programs, special studies with a similar focus, and primary supervision of responses to special requests from the Superintendent, the Executive Directors of Early Childhood Programs and the Office of Research and Evaluation, and the Assistant Director of Priority Operations Evaluation Services.

One Research Associate will head a subunit (A) of two Research Assistants and two Research Interns with primary responsibility for day to day operations regarding (1) the Parent Involvement component, (2) the Supportive Services component, (3) the Training and Staff Development component, (4) Data Collection and Recording (including, as appropriate, first stages in data reduction) with respect to center room/classroom process and selected educational/developmental testing (5) regular feedback to field and administrative program staff.

The other Research Associate will also head a subunit (B) of two Research Assistants and two Research Interns, and will have primary responsibility for the day to day activities related to: (1) development/refinement of complex instruments, particularly classroom observation devices, (2) final data reduction and data analysis, particularly with respect to the education/child development component (3) maintenance and further development of computerized longitudinal files, including all areas of coordination of operations with the Office of Data Processing, (4) design and proposal preparation, and (5) development of demographic and cost analysis information systems.

The Associates will coordinate areas of joint responsibility which include assignment of classroom observation loads, development and maintenance of "loose leaf evaluation" folders, appropriate distribution of report-writing assignments and accomplishment of special study areas selected by each staff member. The latter two points form the next and final sections of this outline.

B. REPORTS

It is the joint responsibility of the Research Associates to assign and assist in, as needed, the planning and actual preparation of reports based on the attached program by component matrix.

The preparation of standard reporting formats (of a brief, direct nature) are planned for component-within-program reports. Across-component reports for each program will be more extensive and will rely on more intensive study of relationships among program characteristics.

C. SPECIAL STUDIES

An important responsibility of each staff member will be the selection and accomplishment (in consultation with their immediate supervisor) of at least one special study each year. The purpose of this dimension of the unit's activities is two-fold:

(1) to establish an on-going research emphasis in the unit, and (2) to allow each staff member to focus on areas of interest conducive to professional development, and directly related to the areas of responsibility of the unit.

It is expected that some of these studies will fall into what will be tentatively called "the 100 series." These will be in-depth investigations of explanatory factors for the performance of samples of 100 pupils from the longitudinal files (e.g., what

TENTATIVE MATRIX OF PROPOSED ECEU REPORTS ON A PROGRAM BY COMPONENT BASIS

COMPONENTS	EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS							
	CHILD CARE	DAY CARE SERVICES	FOLLOW THROUGH	GET SET DAY CARE	KINDERGARTEN	LEARNING CENTERS[1]	PARENT COOPERATIVE NURSERIES	PREKINDERGARTEN HEAD START
I. EDUCATION/ CHILD DEVELOPMENT A. DEVELOPMENTAL MEASURES	(X)[2]			(X)		(X)	(X)	X
B. STANDARDIZED TESTS			X		X	(X)		
C. CENTER/ CLASSROOM OBSERVATION	X	(X)	X	X	X	(X)	X	X
D. LONGITUDINAL FILE DATA	X	X	X	X	(X)	(X)	X	X
II. PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMPONENT	X	X	X	X	(X)	(X)	X	X
III. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES COMPONENT	X	(X)	X	X	(X)	(X)	X	X
IV. TRAINING/ STAFF DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT	X	X	X	X	(X)	(X)	X	X

1 = this program is evaluated primarily through the Division of Federal Evaluation Resource Services (FERS); a cooperative, complementary arrangement regarding evaluation will be established between FERS and ECEU.

2 = parentheses indicate probable but not yet confirmed areas of evaluation activity for each program.

accounts for above 50th %ile performance in reading in the 6th grade among this group of 100 pupils selected according to specified criteria -- Pre-K Head Start, Follow Through experience, etc.). The special studies area is also seen as perhaps the most effective way to determine non-cognitive factors responsible for or associated with various types of performance.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This brief paper is intended as a fairly detailed outline of the organization and work of the ECEU. It requires, as is apparent, considerably more detail, e.g., in the way of explicit time lines and delineation of all stages of planning and execution of the various responsibilities, in order to become actually operative. These next explicit phases have been the subject of planning meetings since late August and final time lines will be available early in October, 1976.

APPENDIX A

EARLY CHILDHOOD EVALUATION UNIT:

RANKINGS OF PRIORITIES BY

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM DIRECTORS

EDUCATION/CHILD DEVELOPMENT

EXPRESSED PRIORITIES	RANK
(1) Program effects on socio-emotional development	44
(2) Types of kindergarten programs and their impact	45
(3) Identification of successful teaching styles in program grades	38
(4) Teacher attitudes toward programs	38
(5) The effects of formal, and empirically derived, instructional models	22.5
(6) Assessment of developmental status (e.g. by use of the Denver Developmental Screening Test (D.D.S.T.) or some other instrument (s)	22.5
(7) Effect of prekindergarten experience on school performance	5
(8) Articulation of developmental status records between prekindergarten and kindergarten programs	22.5
(9) Identification of promising teaching strategies for the upper elementary grades	38
(10) Analysis of Early Childhood Programs' effects on upper elementary and later school performance (achievement, self-image, etc.)	10
(11) Determination of appropriate amount of program exposure for individual children	42.5
(12) Assessment of program implementation	5

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

EXPRESSED PRIORITIES	RANK
(1) Analysis of the type and extent of parent involvement in each Early Childhood Program	10
(2) Articulated record system regarding parent involvement between prekindergarten and school programs	10
(3) The effects of parent involvement on child performance	16.5
(4) The effects of parent involvement (types) on program performance	16.5
(5) Community perceptions of the various Early Childhood Programs	33
(6) Program effects on families	22.5
(7) Nature and extent of career development opportunities available	33
(8) Nature and extent of volunteer programs (parent and non-parent)	28.5
(9) Patterns of parent employment attributable to programs	28.5

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

EXPRESSED PRIORITIES	RANK
(1) Analysis of the nature and extent of special medical services available in programs	10
(2) Analysis of the nature and extent of special dental services available	10
(3) Analysis of the nature and extent of special psychological services available	10
(4) Analysis of the nature and extent of special social services available	16.5
(5) Analysis of the nature and extent of special nutritional services available	16.5
(6) Identification of MH/MR groups served and facilities needed	42.5
(7) Effects of special supportive services	16.5

TRAINING/STAFF DEVELOPMENT

EXPRESSED PRIORITIES	RANK
(1) Analysis of training needs/ requests	10
(2) Analysis of nature and extent of training/staff development programs	2.5
(3) Analysis of the effects of training/staff development programs	2.5
(4) Catalogue of Early Childhood training activities	28.5
(5) Articulated record system of training participation across programs	38

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

EXPRESSED PRIORITIES	RANK
(1) Pupil Attendance System (e.g., CARE system, and/or tie-in with Pupil Directory, etc.	1
(2) Staff attendance system	22.5
(3) Program materials inventory system	38
(4) Referral system for social service agencies	28.5
(5) Health-care follow-up system, e.g., EPSDT referrals	22.5
(6) Demographic data systems, by-and across-programs	33
(7) Communication system between Early Childhood Programs and the Evaluation Unit and ORE	5

SPECIAL STUDIES

EXPRESSED PRIORITIES	RANK
(1) Study of mobility/attendance patterns in a comparison population (e.g., other large cities) or from locally developed base-line data	38
(2) Study of fiscal procedures, e.g., the relationship between availability of fiscal information and the demands of fiscal decision-making	16.5
(3) On-going study of professional literature for background for evaluation findings and program decisions	28.5
(4) Study of testing programs in Early Childhood in city	28.5
(5) Study of child abuse patterns in program populations	38

APPENDIX B

EARLY CHILDHOOD EVALUATION UNIT STAFF

MANAGER:	Thomas McNamara
RESEARCH ASSOCIATES:	Judith Goodwin, Kenneth Prusso
RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:	Mildred Asano, John McKinney, David Silbermann, Sherran Toll
RESEARCH INTERNS:	Aaron Bass, Cleopatra Figgures Anne Lukshus, Richard Maraschiello
SECRETARIES:	Sara Myers, Elizabeth Jackson, Mildred Marcus

(SUBUNITS)

A. Goodwin, Silbermann, Toll, Bass, Figgures, Jackson

B. Prusso, Asano, McKinney, Lukshus, Maraschiello, Marcus

APPENDIX C

ECEU STAFF LOCATIONS

ROOM 401: J. Goodwin, K. Prusso, A. Lukshus, J. McKinney
(Phones: 7760, 7766)

ROOM 403: T. McNamara, S. Myers (Phone: 7763)

ROOM 405: (Inner Office)

M. Asano, D. Silbermann, S. Toll, A. Bass, C. Figgures,
R. Maraschiello (Phones: 7757, 7762, 7764)

(Outer Office)

E. Jackson, M. Marcus (Phones as above)